| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of subscriptions ..... | £12,903 | 9 | 0 |
| Set apart for purchase of pictures, bronzes, statuettes, tazzas, and prize engravings ..... | 6,449 | 0 | 0 |
| Cost of engraving of the year ..... | 3,640 | 19 | 4 |
| Printing, advertising, and other expenses, including reserve of 2½ per cent. required by the charter .... | 2,813 | 9 | 8 |
| | £12,903 | 9 | 0 |

The accounts have been audited by two members of the general body of subscribers.—Mr. Stewart Pixley and Mr. William Walker (to whom thanks are offered), and three members of the Finance Committee.

The sum set apart for prizes to be selected by the prizeholders themselves will be thus allotted, viz.:—

| | | Each. |
|---|---|---|
| 24 works of art, value | ..... | £10 |
| 20 | ,, ..... | 15 |
| 20 | ,, ..... | 20 |
| 20 | ,, ..... | 25 |
| 20 | ,, ..... | 40 |
| 12 | ,, ..... | 50 |
| 10 | ,, ..... | 60 |
| 4 | ,, ..... | 70 |
| 8 | ,, ..... | 80 |
| 3 | ,, ..... | 100 |
| 2 | ,, ..... | 150 |
| 1 | ,, ..... | 200 |

To these are to be added:—

3 bronzes, "Satan Dismayed;"
40 Parian Statuettes, "Solitude;"
30 tazzas in iron;
25 sets of medals;
488 impressions of "The Crucifixion."

The total sum appropriated to the purchase and production of works of art, including the cost of the engraving, is 10,089*l.*

The bronzes, Parian statuettes, tazzas, and medals, will be allotted to the first 100 names drawn consecutively at the close of the general distribution. The engravings of "The Crucifixion" will be allotted to the names standing one hundredth in the list preceding and succeeding that of each of the prizeholders determined as above stated; with the proviso that a prize have not fallen to that number to-day; in such case the prize will pass to the next succeeding name. Notice will be sent to those entitled to the statuettes, tazzas, medals, and prints, in the course of two or three days. The other prizeholders will be informed of the result by to-night's post.

It is occasionally suggested by subscribers who have not inquired particularly into the working of the Society, that the printed receipts given to subscribers should be numbered consecutively, and that the number on the receipt should stand against the subscriber's name in the list, so that he might be certain when a number is announced as entitled to a prize whether or not it appertains to him. When it is remembered, however, that receipts are sent out during the year in large numbers to the various agents and secretaries throughout the world, and are only partly used, the remainder being returned, it must be seen that this course could not conveniently be adopted. The Council would add, though it can scarcely be necessary, that should any subscriber feel a doubt on the subject, the list of names numbered for the purposes of the distribution will lie at the offices of the Corporation, and may be examined at any time.

The Council would urge upon the prizeholders, as of old, great care in the selection of their works of art. With a view to procuring for them all the advantages possible, the Council have addressed to the Royal Academy a request for the admission to the private view of that exhibition of all prizeholders of 40*l.* and upwards.

The Council, in their annual reports, without pretending to teach, have constantly sought to urge the want of artistic teaching,—to show the importance of bringing art to the aid of our manufactures,—to incite our rising painters to the serious consideration of the real capability and great destiny of the fine arts, and the necessity of earnestness—if they would do their duty in the profession they have adopted;—to urge upon authorities that it is their part to assist in developing the artistic talent of the country: further, to make for the artist an appreciating public, and to obtain for the multitude the pure enjoyments of art by making cheap art good, and good art universal. The extensive publication of their reports, and the repetition of them through the kind offices of the periodical press of the country, have spread these views throughout the length and breadth, not merely of this kingdom, but of others, and have unquestionably had considerable effect in forming public opinion. What that public opinion in respect of the arts now is, as compared with what it was when the Art-Union of London began its work, it is unnecessary to point out: the difference in tone, the difference in knowledge, is observable in every society. Still we have but commenced to move. There is great want of information on the theoretical principles of art; educated men are still to be found, who acknowledge without any feeling of disgrace, that they know nothing of the subject. The foundation of the Taylor and Radcliffe Institutions at Oxford, and of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, may be expected to produce beneficial results in this respect amongst those who should be teachers.

We have in this country no minister for the fine arts: the tangibly useful has mainly had our attention; the usefulness there is in the beautiful is still sadly overlooked. The establishment of a Government "Department of Practical Art" must be regarded as a step in the right direction; the spread of schools of design throughout the kingdom, the establishment of the Suburban Artisan School at Camden-Town (where from 100 to 160 of the operative classes are sedulously instructed in drawing and modelling at a nominal cost), and the endeavours making to increase the number of elementary drawing-schools throughout the country, cannot fail to have a very beneficial effect on our manufactures and our taste. It may be suggested, too, with reference to these, that although the greater proportion of the artistical talent they may evoke will be directed to practical art, yet some of the greatest of it will diverge into other paths, and soar into the higher regions of fine art. Much of this talent must either long struggle with discouragement, or even finally sink, unless a mart exists for the productions of such ambitious individuals. The Art-Union affords an opportunity for such encouragement: every subscriber, therefore, in giving his contribution, may feel that he is stretching out a helping hand to some rising artist who may yet acquire fame and fortune for himself, and ultimately enhance the glory of his country. In order to maintain an army of veterans, the recruits must be cared for. In Edinburgh, it seems, large bodies of young men and boys, brought together by the abstinence movement, meet in the evening for instruction in drawing, and are making considerable progress. This general spread of artistic skill will necessarily react, too, upon the higher branches of art. An indifferent artist in a community of draughtsmen would scarcely be tolerated. Of artists capable of the highest purposes of art there will still be few; but by universal cultivation the chance of developing them of course becomes greater. "What is individual and particular may be everywhere found, and may always be evidenced to the senses; but that which is universal and general, can only be grasped by thought, or the action of the mind. The general as regards imitation can only be defined by the understanding, and genius alone can imitate it."

In closing their report the Council appeal with confidence to the public for renewed co-operation in furtherance of the important objects of the Art-Union of London.

George Godwin, } Hon.
Lewis Pocock, } Secs.

Sir C. Lemon, Bart. in moving the adoption of the report, said,—The report is so complete in itself, that I should be wasting your time, if I were to expatiate upon it. I must, however, in a very few words, before I sit down, express my concurrence in it on two points. I must offer to join with you in congratulation to the Council of the Society, for the way in which its affairs have been conducted in the course of the last year. This society I look upon as the Militia of art, and it has been organised in a way which I cannot but think is of national importance. The objects of the Society, as set forth in that report, appear to me to be two;—first of all to improve the artists themselves, and to give them opportunity of bringing to the test of public opinion their own judgment; but I may say, a more important object is the second alluded to in the report, namely, that of enabling the public themselves to appreciate art. It would not be fair to attribute to the Art-Union all the effects of the efforts made of late years to disseminate and diffuse a love of art through the different classes of the people; but the test that is alluded to in that report, as to the progress which has been made, is, I think, exceedingly satisfactory. At the present time it is perfectly clear that art is appreciated by the public generally; objects of art may be now exhibited to the public view without fear of injury, in a way, which a few years ago could not have occurred; and, I think, referring to the glorious incidents of last year, when not only objects of art, but of the highest interest and value, generally, were exhibited in so generous a way to the public, it is very satisfactory to know that so very little injury has been done.

Sir Gardiner Wilkinson seconded the resolution.

The Chairman then said,—Ladies and gentlemen, in putting to you the question whether this report should be received, permit me to congratulate you upon its favourable nature. We may fairly consider it as not merely a matter of congratulation to ourselves, but also to our country. We must consider that this report shows that there is an increasing wish on the part of the public to become possessors of works of art; and we must consider that this desire will increase the demand for those works of art; and, guided by the increasing good taste of our country, will improve the school of art in England. Ladies and gentlemen, our school of art is supported by the public alone; the Sovereign or the aristocracy may smile upon and encourage the artist, but the artist is supported by the public alone, and, therefore, by his country. Go into any public exhibition of works of art—of modern works of art, in this metropolis—admire any remarkable picture, and inquire the name of its fortunate possessor, and you will generally find that it belongs to some well-known professional gentleman, or to some other individual who has attained well-merited wealth by his own honourable exertions. Go into any one exhibition of paintings in any provincial town, and you will find that the modern works of art there exhibited are not sent in by the great noble of the neighbourhood, but, in general, by the professional or mercantile gentlemen of the town itself. I need not weary you by descanting upon the close and most important connection of our school of art with our manufactures; but I shall merely congratulate you and the country on this increasing patronage of our artists, as having the effect of gradually bringing our British school of art to its own proper position—that of being the first in the world.

The resolution having been carried unanimously,—

Professor Hosking said,—Ladies and Gentlemen, your honorary secretaries have added another to the many claims they have upon you, by calling upon a man who cannot make a speech to move a resolution. The resolution, however, is one which will be its own recommendation. It is to propose to you that the best thanks of the Association be offered to the Council for their past exertions, and for their valuable services during the year. I have one remark to make for your consideration, that it is the Council who perform the labour. You have the pleasurable part, to contribute the trifling sum which is called for from each member; and you have the pleasure of receiving the consequences of your contributions; but the labour is that of the Council, and for the excellent spirit and taste in which their labours are performed, and their services rendered, I call upon you to give them your thanks.

Mr. J. A. Arnold seconded the resolution, which was unanimously carried.

Mr. Serjeant Thompson.—I beg to acknowledge the kindness which the Council have always met